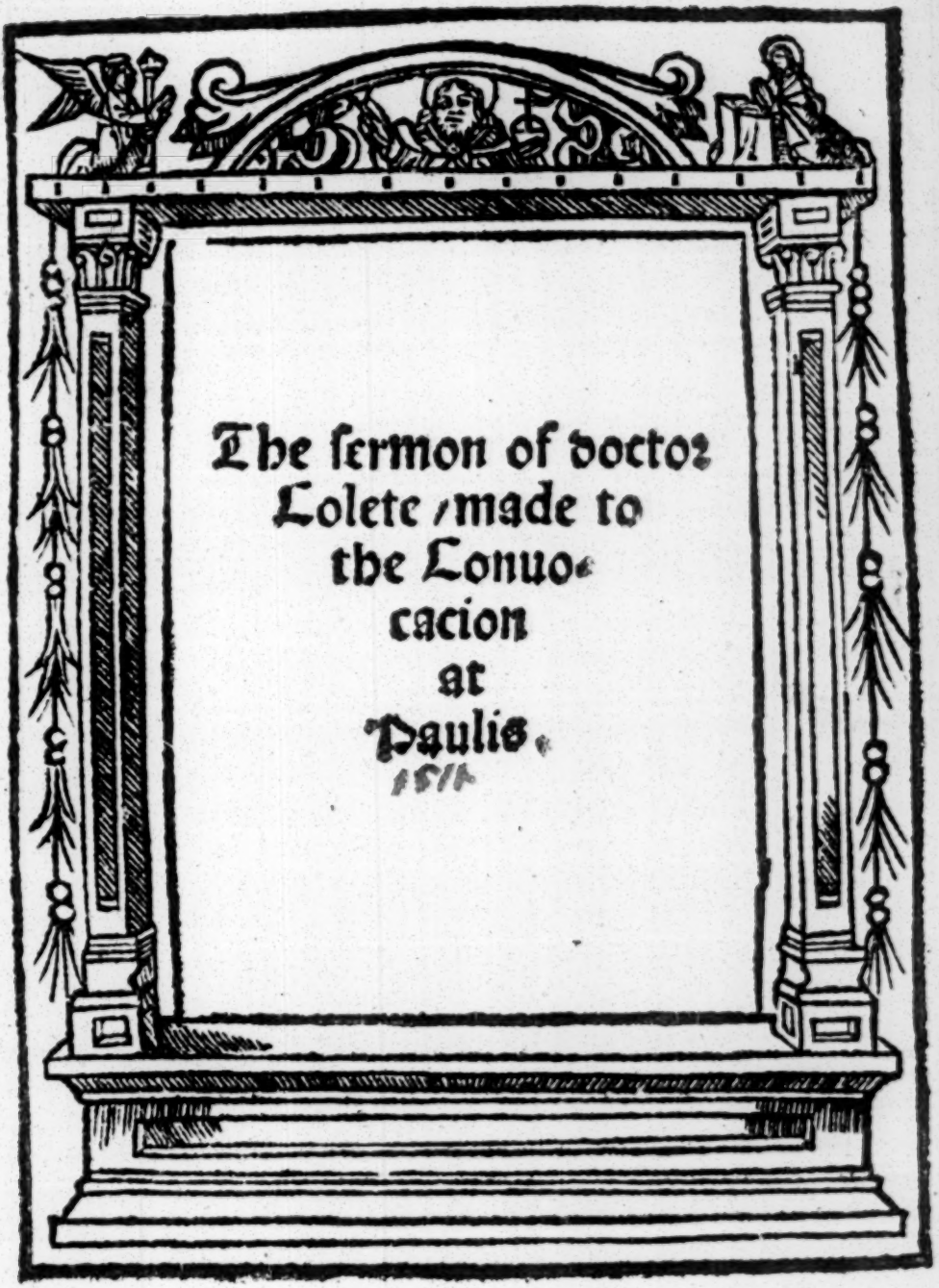

The ſermon of doctor Colete / made to the Conuocacion at Paulis.

1511

Ye are come to gether to day/ y fathers and ryght wyse men to entre councel: in the whiche/what ye wyll do/ and what matters ye will handle/yet we vnderstãde nat. But we wyssbe/ that ones remẽbrynge your name and profession/ ye wolde mynde the reformation of the churches matter. For hit was neuer more nede: And the state of the churche dyd neuer desyre more your endeuours. For the spouse of Christe/ the churche/ whome ye wolde shulde be without spotte or wryncle/ is made foule and euyll fauored/as sayth Esaias: the faythfull citie is made an harlotte: And as saithe Jeremias: She hath done lecherye with many louers: wherby she hath conceyued many sedes of wickednes/and dayly bryngeth forth verye foule frute. wherfore I came hyther to day fathers/to warne you/

that of this your coũcel with al your mynde/ ye thynke vpon the reformation of the churche. But forsothe I came nat willigly: for I knewe myne vnworthynes. I sawe besyde/ howe harde it was to please the precise iugement of so many men. For I iuged it vtterly vnworthy & vnmete/ ye and almost to malapert/ that I a seruant/ shulde counsayle my lordes: That I a sõne/ shuld teache you my fathers. Truely it had ben meter for some one of the fathers/ that is to say/ you prelates myght haue done it with more graue auctorite/ & greatter wisedome. But the cõmaundement was to be obeyed of the mooste reuerent father and lorde/ the archebyshoppe/ presydent of this councell/ whiche layde vpon me this burden/ truely to heuy for me. we rede/ that the prophette Samuell sayde: Obedience is better than sacrifice; wherfore fathers

and

and ryght worthy men/ I praye you/ and beseche you / that this daye ye wolde sustayne my weakenes with your goodnes and pacience. Farther more to helpe me at the begynnynge with your good prayers. And before all thynge let vs praye vnto god the father almighty. Fyrste remẽbrynge our most holy father the pope / & all spirituall pastours / with all christen people / farther more the moste reuerent father & lorde / the archebyshop presydente of this councell / and all byshoppes / and all the Clergye/and all the people of Englande: Remembringe finally this your cõgregation/ desyrynge god to inspire your myndes so accordyngly to agre / to suche profyte and frute of the churche / that ye seme nat after the councell fynysshed to haue bene gethered to gether in vayne and without cause.
Lette vs all say Pater noster.

To exhorte you reuerent fathers to the endeuour of reformation of the churches estate: bycause that nothig hath so disfigured the face of the churche/as hath the facion of secular and worldly lyuynge in clerkes and pristes: I knowe nat where more cōueniently to take begynnynge of my tale/than of the apostle Paule/in whose temple ye are gethered to gether. For he writynge vnto the Romanes/& vnder their name vnto you saith: Be you nat conformed to this worlde: but be you reformed in the newnes of your vnderstandyng/that ye may proue what is the good wyll of god well pleasynge and perfecte. This dyd the apostle write to al christen men/but most chiefly vnto pristes and byssh̄ops. Pristes and byssh̄ops are the light of the worlde. For vnto them saide our sauiour: you are the lyghte of the worlde. And he sayde

also:

also: If the lyghte that is in the be darkenes/how darke shal the darkenes be? That is to say/if pristes and byssh ops/that shulde be as lyghtes rēne in the darke way of the worlde/howe darke than shall the secular people be? wherfore saint Paule said chiefly vnto pristis and bissh ops: Be you nat conformable to this worlde/but be ye refourmed. In the whiche wordes the apostle doth two thyngs. Fyrst he dothe forbyd that we be nat conformable to the worlde & be made carnall. Farthermore he doth commaunde that we be reformed in the spirite of god/wherby we are spirituall. I entendyng to folowe this order/I will speke first of confirmation/thā after of reformation. Be you nat (saith he) cōformable to this worlde. The apostle calleth the worlde/the wayes and maner of secular lyuyng: the whiche chiefly doth reste in foure

euylles of this worlde: that is to saye in diuiliſſhe pride/in carnall concupiſcence/in worldlye couetouſnes/ in ſecular buſines: Theſe are in the worlde/as saynt Johñ the apoſtle witneſſethe in his piſtell canonicall. For he ſaithe: All thynge that is in the worlde/is eyther the concupiſcence of the fleſſhe/or the concupiſcece of the eies/or pride of lyfe. The ſame are now treigne in the church/ and in men of the churche/that we may ſeme truely to ſaye/all thynge that is in the churche/is either concupiſcence of fleſhe/or eies/or pride of lyfe. And fyrſt for to ſpeke of pride of life/howe moche gredines and appetite of honour and dignitie is nowe a dayes in men of the churche? How ronne they/ye almoſte out of brethe/ from one benefice to an other: from the leſſe to the more/from the lower to the hygher? who ſeeth nat this? who

who ſeynge this ſorroweth nat?
More ouer theſe that are in the ſame dignities the mooſte parte of them dothe go with ſo ſtatelye a countenaunce and with ſo bighe lokes/ that they ſeme nat to be put in the humble byſſhoprike of Chriſte/ but rather in the bighe lordeſhyp/ and power of the worlde/nat knowyng/ nor aduertiſynge/ what Chriſte/the mayſter of all mekenes ſayde vnto his diſciples/ whome he called to be byſſhoppes and priſtis: The princis of people (ſaythe he) haue lordſhyp of them: and thoſe that be in auctoritie haue power: but do ye nat ſo: but he that is greatter amonge you/ let hym be miniſter. He that is bigheſt i dignite/ be he the ſeruāt of all men. The ſōne of man came nat to be mynyſtred vnto/but to miniſtre. By whiche wordꝭ our ſauiour doth plainly teache/that the mayſtrye in the churche/ is none

other thynge than a mynystration: And the bygbe dignitie in a man of the churche to be none other thynge than a meke seruice.

The seconde secular euyll is carnall concupiscence. Hath nat this vice so growen and waxen in the churche as a fludde of theyr luste? so that there is nothyng loked for more diligently/ in this moste besye tyme/of the moste parte of pristes/ than that that doth delite and please the senses? They gyue them selfes to feastes and bankettynge: They spende them selfe in vaine babling: They gyue them selfe to sportes and playes: They applye them selfe to huntyng and haukyng. They drowne them selfe in the delites of this worlde. Procurers & fynders of lustes they set by. Against the whiche kynde of men/ Judas the apostle crieth e out in his pistell/ sayinge: wo vnto them/ whiche haue gone the

way

way of Cain. They are foule & beastly
festyng in their meates without feare
fedynge them selfe: fluddes of the
wylde see/fomynge fomyng out their
confusions: vnto whom the storme of
darkenes is reserued for euerlastyng.
Couetousenes is the thyrde secular
euyll: the whiche saynt Johñ the a-
postle calleth cõcupiscence of the eies:
Saynt Paule callethe hit idolatrye.
This obomynable pestilence hath so
entred in the mynde/almoste of all
pristis/and so hath blynded the eies
of the mynde/that we are blynde to
all thiges/but only vnto those/which
seme to bringe vnto vs some gaynes.
For what other thinge seke we nowe
a dayes in the churche/than fatte be-
nefices and hyghe promotions? yea
and in the same promotions/of what
other thynge do we passe vpon/than
of our tithes and rentes? That we
care nat howe many/how chargefull/
howe

howe great benefices we take/so that they be of greatte valure.

O couetousenes: saint Paule iustly called the the roote of all euyll. Of the cometh this heapynge of benefices vpon benefices: Of the so great pensions assigned of many benefices resigned: Of the all the suynge for tithes/for offrynge/for mortuaries/for delapidations/by the right & title of the churche: For the which thige we stryue no lesse than for our owne lyfe: O couetousnes: of the cometh these chargeful visitatiõs of bishops: Of the comethe the corruptenes of courtes and these dayly newe inuentions: where with the selye people are so sore vexed. Of the cometh the besite and wantonnes of officials.

O couetousenes mother of all iniquite. Of the comethe this feruent studye of ordinaryes to dilate theyr iurisdictions: Of the comethe this

woode

woode and ragynge contention in ordinaries / of the insinuation of testamentes : of the cometh the vndewe sequestration of frutes : Of the cometh the superstitious obseruynge of all those lawes / that sounde to any lucre / settynge a syde and dispisynge those that concerne the amendement of maners. what shulde I reherse the reste? To be shorte / and to conclude at one worde : All corruptnes / all the decaye of the churche / all the offences of the worlde / come of the couetousnes of pristis. Accordyng to that of saynt Paule / that here I repete agayne / & beate in to your eares: Couetousnes is the roote of all euyll.

The fourthe seculare euyll / that spotteth and maketh euyll fauored the face of the churche / is the continuall seculare occupation : wherein pristes & bishops nowe a dayes doth besy them selfe / the seruantes rather

of

of men than of god : the warriours rather of this worlde than of Christ. For the apostle Paule writeth vnto Timothe : No man beinge goddes souldiour / turmoyle hym selfe with secular busines. The warrig of them is nat carnall but spirituall. For our warrynge is to pray / to rede and studie scriptures / to preache the worde of god / to mynystre the sacramentes of helth / to do sacrifice for the people / and to offre hostis for theyr synnes. For we are mediatours and meanes vnto god for men : The whiche saynt Paule wytnesseth / writynge to the Hebrewes : Euery byshop (saith he) taken of men / is ordayned for men in those thynges that be vnto god / that he may offre gyftes and sacrifices for synnes. wherfore those apostles that were the fyrste pristes and byshops / dyd so moche abhorre from all maner of medlynge of secular thynges /

that

that they wolde nat mynyſtre the meate / that was neceſſarye to poore people all thoughe that was a great worke of vertue : but they ſayde : it is nat mete / that we ſhulde leaue the worde of god / and ſerue tables : we wyll be continually in prayer / and preachynge the worde of god. And ſaynt Paule crieth vnto the Corinthes. If you haue any ſecular beſynes / ordeine them to be iuges / that be mooſte in contempte in the churche. without doubte / of this ſecularitie / and that clerkes and priſtis (leauyng all ſpiritualnes) do tourmoyle them ſelfe with erthly occupations / many euyls do folowe. Fyrſt the dignitie of priſthode is diſhonoured / the which is greatter than other the kynges or emperours : it is egall with the dignitie of angels. But the brightnes of this great dignitie is ſore ſhadowed / whan priſtis are occupied in erthlye

thinges

thynges: whose conuersation ought to be in heuen.

Secondarily pristhode is dispised/ whan there is no difference betwixte suche pristes and lay people: but accordynge to the prophecye of Ozee. As the people be/so are the pristes.

Thirdly the beautifull ordre/& holy dignitie in the churche/ is confused/ whan the highest in the churche do meddle with vile & erthly thyngs: & in their stede/ vile & abiecte persones do exercise high and heuenly thiges.

Fourthly the lay people haue great occasion of euylles and cause to fall/ whan those men whose duetie is to drawe men from the affection of this worlde: by their cõtinuall cõuersatiõ in this worlde: teche mẽ to loue this worlde/ & of the loue of the worlde cast them downe heedlyng in to hell.

Moze ouer in suche pristes/ that are so beried/ there muste nedes folowe hipo-

hipocrisy. For whā they be so mixte and confused with the laye people / vnder the garment and habite of a priste/they lyue playnely after the lay facion. Also by spirituall weakenes and bondage feare / whan they are made weake with the waters of this worlde: they dare neither do nor say / but suche thynges as they knowe to be pleasaunt and thankefull to theyr princes. At last ignorancy and blyndnes/whan they are blynded with the darkenes of this worlde / they se nothynge but erthly thynges. wherfore our sauiour Christ nat without cause / dyd warne the prelates of his churche: Take hede (sayde he) leste your hartes be greued with glotonye and dronkēnes/and with the cares of this worlde / with the cares (sayth he) of this worlde / wherwith the hartes of pristis beinge sore charged / they can nat holde and lyfte vp theyr myndes

to hyghe and heuenly thynges.

Many other euylles there be/beside those that folowe of the secularitie of pristis / whiche were longe here to reherce but I make an ende.

These be the foure euyls that I haue spoken of / O fathers / O pristes/ by the whiche we are conformable to this worlde / by the whiche the face of the churche is made yll fauoured/ by the whiche the state of it is distroyed / truely moche more than it was in the begynnynge by the persecution of tyrantes: or afterwarde by the inuasion that folowed of heretikes.

For in the persecution of tyrantes/ the churche beinge vexed was made stronger and brighter: In the inuasion of heretikes / the churche beinge shaken / was made wyser and more cunning in holy writte. But sens this secularitie was brought in/after that the secular maner of lyuynge crepte

in/

in / in the men of the churche: the roote of all ſpirituall lyfe / that is to ſay / charite was extincte: The which taken awaye / there can nother wyſe nor ſtronge churche be in god.

In this tyme alſo we perceyue contradiction of the laye people. But they are nat ſo moche contrary vnto vs / as we are our ſelfe: Nor their cõtrarynes hurteth nat vs ſo moche as the contrarynes of our euyll lyfe / the whiche is contrary bothe to god and Chriſte. For he ſayde: who that is nat with me / is agaynſt me.

we are alſo nowe a dayes greued of heretikes / mẽ mad with marueilous foliſſhenes: but the hereſies of them are nat ſo peſtilent and pernicious vnto vs and the people / as the euyll and wicked lyfe of priſtis: the whiche (if we beleue ſaynt Barnarde) is a certayne kynde of hereſie / and chiefe of all / and mooſte peryllous. For that

ſame holy father / in a certayne conuocation / preachynge vnto the prieſtis of his tyme / in a certayne ſermon / ſo he ſayde by theſe wordes. There be many catholyke and faythfull men in ſpeakynge and preachynge / the whiche ſame men are heretickes in worckynge : For that that heretykes do by euyll teachinge : that ſame do they throughe euyll example / they leade the people out of the ryghte waye / and bringe them in to errour of life. And ſo moche they are worſe than heretikes / howe moche their workes preuayle theyr wordes This that holy father ſaynt Barnarde / with a great and a feruente ſpirite / ſayde agaynſt the ſecte of euyll prieſtis in his tyme : By whiche wordes he ſheweth playnly / to be two maner of hereſies / the one to be of peruerſe teachynge / and the other of naughtye lyfe : Of whiche this latter is worſe

and

and more perillous: the whiche raig neth nowe in the churche in priſtis/ nat lyuynge priſtly but ſecularly/ to the vtter and miſcrable diſtruction of the churche. wherfore you fathers/ you priſtis/and all you of the clergie/ at the laſte loke vp and awake from this youre ſleepe in this forgetfulle worlde: And at the laſte/ beinge well awaked/here Paule criēge vnto you: Be you nat conformable vnto this worlde. And this for the firſte parte. Nowe let vs come to the ſeconde.

The ſeconde parte of reformation.

BVt be you reformed in the newnes of your vnderſtandyng. The ſeconde thyng that ſaynt Paule commaundeth/ is that we be refourmed in to a newe vnderſtandynge/ that we ſmelle thoſe thynges that be of god. Be we refor-

med vnto thoſe thynges/ that are cō-
trary to thoſe I ſpake of euen nowe
that is to ſaye / to mekenes/to ſober-
nes/ to charitie / to ſpirituall occupa-
tion : That as the ſayde Paule wri-
teth vnto Titus/Renienge al wicked-
nes and worldlye deſyres / we lyue in
this worlde ſoberlye / truelye / and
vertuouſly.

This reformation and reſtorynge of
the churches eſtate muſte nedes be-
gynne of you our fathers / and ſo fo-
lowe in vs your priſtis / and in all the
clergie: you are our beedes: you are
an example of lyuyng vnto vs. Vnto
you we loke as vnto markes of our
direction. In you and in your lyfe we
deſire to rede as in lyuely bokes/how
and after what facion we may lyue.
wherfore if you wyll ponder & loke
vpon our mottis/firke take away the
blockes out of your eies. It is an olde
prouerbe : Phiſition hele thy ſelfe.

you

you ſpirituall phiſitions / firſte taſte you this medicine of purgation of maners : and than after offre vs the ſame to taſte.

The way / wherby the churche may be reformed in to better facion / is nat for to make new lawes. For ther be lawes many / inowe / and out of nõbre / as Solomon ſaith : Nothig is newe vnder the ſonne. For the euyls that are nowe in the churche / were before in tyme paſte / and there is no faute / but that fathers haue prouyded verye good remedyes for it. There are no treſpaces / but that there be lawes agaynſt them in the body of the Canon lawe. Therfore it is no nede / that newe lawes and cõſtitutiõs be made : But that thoſe that are made all redye / be kepte / wherfore in this your aſſemble / let thoſe lawes / that are made / be called before you & reherſed. Thoſe lawes (I ſaye) that reſtrayne

vice/and thoſe that furder vertue.

Fyrſte let thoſe lawes be reherſed/ that do warne you fathers/ that ye put nat ouer ſoone your handes on euery man/ or admitte vnto holy orders. For there is the well of euyls/ that the brode gate of holy orders opened/ euery man that offereth him ſelfe/is all where admytted/ without pullynge backe. Therof ſpryngethe and cometh out the people/ that are in the churche bothe of vnlerned and euyll priſtis. It is nat inough for a priſte (after my iugement) to conſtrue a collette/to put forthe a queſtion/ or to anſwere to a ſophieme/ but moche more a good/ a pure/ and a holy life/ approued maners/metely lernynge of holy ſcripture/ſome knowlege of the ſacramentes. Chiefely and aboue all thynge the feare of god/ and loue of the heuenly lyfe.

Let the lawes be reherſed/ that cō-

mgunde

maunde that benefices of the church be gyuen to those that are worthye: And that promotions be made in the churche by the ryght balance of vertue/ nat by carnall affection: nat by the acception of persones: wherby it happeneth nowe a dayes that boyes for olde men/ fooles for wyse men/ euyll for good do reigne and rule.

Let the lawes be reherſed/ that warreth agaynſt the ſpotte of Symonie. The whiche corruption/ the whiche infection/ the which cruell and odible peſtilence ſo crepeth nowe abrode/ as the canker euyll/ in the myndes of priſtis/ that many of them are nat aferde nowe a dayes/ bothe by prayer and ſeruice/ rewardes and promeſſes/ to gette them great dignities.

Let the lawes be reherſed/ that commaunde perſonal reſidence of curates in theyr churches. For of this many euylles growe: by cauſe all thynges

nowe a dayes are done by vicaries and paryſſhe prieſtis: ye and thoſe foliſſhe alſo/and vnmete: and often tymes wycked: that ſeeke none other thinge in the people than foule lucre/ wherof cometh occaſion of euyll hereſies / and yll chriſtendome in the people.

Let be reherſed the lawes and holy rules gyuen of fathers / of the lyfe and honeſtie of clerkes: that forbyd that a clerke be no marchant/that he be no vſerer / that he be no hunter / that he be no cõmon player / that he bere no weapon.

The lawes that forbydde clerkes to haũte tauernes: that forbydde them to haue ſuſpecte familiaritie with women. The lawes that commaunde ſobernes / and a meſurablenes in apparayle / and temperaunce/in adournynge of the body.

Let be reherſed alſo to my lordes

theſe

theſe monkes/chanons/and religious men / the lawes that cõmaunde them to go the ſtrayte waye/ that leadethe vnto heuen : leauynge the brode way of the worlde : that cõmaunde them nat to tourmoyle them ſelfe in buſy-nes / nother ſecular nor other : That commaunde / that they ſewe nat in princis courtes for erthlye thynges : For it is in the coũcell of Calcidinẽs/ that monkes oughte onely to gyue them ſelfe to prayer and faſtyng/ and to the chaſtyſing of theyr fleſſhe/and obſeruynge of theyr rules.

Aboue all thynges let the lawes be reherſed / that perteyne and concerne you my reuerent fathers and lordes/ byſſhops/lawes of your iuſte and ca-nonicall election : in the chaptres of your churches / with the callynge of the holy goſte. For by cauſe that is nat done nowe a dayes/ And by cauſe prelates are choſen often tymes more

be

be fauour of men than by the grace of god: Therfore truely haue we nat a fewe tymes byshops full littell spirituall / men rather worldly than heuenly / sauorynge more the spirite of this worlde thā the spirite of Christ.

Let the lawes be reherſed of the reſidence of byſhops in theyr dioceſis: that commaunde / that they loke diligently / & take hede to the helthe of ſoules: That they ſowe the worde of god: That they ſhewe them ſelfe in theyr churches / at the leaſte on great holye dayes. That they do ſacrifice for theyr people: That they here the cauſes and matters of poure menne / That they ſuſteine fatherles children and wydowes: That they exerciſe them ſelfe in workes of vertue.

Lette the lawes be reherſed of the good beſtowynge of the patrimonye of Chriſte. The lawes that commaūde that the goodes of the chur-

che

the be ſpente / nat in coſtly byldynge / nat in ſumptuous apparell / & pōpis: nat in feaſtynge and bankettyng: nat in exceſſe and wantonnes: nat in enrichynge of kynsfolke: nat in kepynge of dogges / but in thynges profitable and neceſſarye to the churche.

For whan ſaynt Auguſtyne / ſome tyme byſſhoppe of Englande / dyd aſke the pope Gregorie / howe that the byſſhops & prelates of Englande ſhulde ſpēde their goodes / that were the offrynges of faythfull people. The ſayde pope anſwered (and his anſwere is put in the decrees / in the xij. chap. and ſeconde queſtion) that the goodes of byſhops oughte to be deuided in to. iiij. partes: wherof one parte oughte to be to the byſhoppe and his houſeholde: An other to his clerkes: The thyrde to repayre and vpholde his tenemētes: The fourth to the poure people.

Let

Let the lawes be reherſed / ye and that often tymes / that take away the filthes and vnclenlynes of courtes: that take awaye thoſe daylye newe founde craftes for lucre: that beſye them to pulle awaye this foule couetouſnes / the whiche is the ſpryngē cauſe of all euylles: The whiche is the well of all iniquitie.

At the laſte let be renewed thoſe lawes and conſtitutions of fathers of the celebration of coūcels / that commaunde prouinciall councelles to be oftner vſed for the reformation of the churche. For there neuer happethe nothig more hurtefull to the churche of Chriſte / than the lacke bothe of councell generall and prouinciall.

whan theſe lawes / and ſuche other are reherſed that be for vs / and that concerne the correction of maners / there lacketh nothynge / but that the ſame be put in execution / with all au-

ctorie

ctozitie and power.

That ones (ſeinge we haue a lawe) we lyue after the lawe. Foz the whiche thynges/ with al dewe reuerence/ I call chiefly vpon you fathers. Foz this execution of the lawes/ and obſeruyng of the conſtitutions/muſt nedes begyn of you/that ye may teache vs pziſtis to folowe you by lyuely examples: oz els truelye it wyll be ſayd of you: They laye greuous burdens vpon other mens backes/ and they them ſelfe wyll nat as moche as touche it with theyz lyttell fynger.

Fozſothe if you kepe the lawes:and if you refourme fyzſt your lyfe to the rules of the Canon lawes/than ſhall ye gyue vs lyghte (in the whiche we maye ſe what is to be done of our part) that is to ſay/the lyght of your good example: And we ſeinge our fathers ſo kepig the lawes/ wyll gladly folowe the ſteppes of our fathers.

The

The clergies and ſpirituals parte ones reformed in the churche / than maye we with a iuſte order procede to the reformation of the lays parte: The whiche truely wyll be very eaſy to do: if we fyrſte be reformed. For the bodye folowethe the ſoule. And ſuche rulers as are in the citie / lyke dwellers be in it. wherfore if priſtes that haue the charge of ſoules be good / ſtreyghte the people wyll be good. Our goodnes ſhall teache them more clerelye to be good than all other teachinges and preachiges. Our goodnes ſhall compelle them in to the ryghte way / truelye more effectuouſly / than all your ſuſpendiges and curſynges.

wherfore if ye wyll haue the laye people to lyue after your wyſſhe and wyll: fyrſte lyue you your ſelfe after the wyll of god. And ſo (truſt me) ye ſhall get in thē what ſo euer ye wyll.

ye

ye wyll be obeyed of them/ right
hit is. For in the epistell to the He-
brewes/ these are the wordes of saynt
Paule to the laye people.
Obey (sayth he) to your rulers/ and
be you vnder them. But if ye wyll
haue this obedience: fyrste performe
in you the reason and cause of obe-
dience: the whiche the sayde Paule
dothe teache: and it foloweth in the
texte: that is: Take you hede also
diligétly/ as thoughe ye shulde gyue
a reckenynge for theyr soules: and
they wyll obey you.
you wyll be honored of the people:
it is reason. For saynt Paule writeth
vnto Timothe: Prestis that rule wel/
are worthye double honours/ chiefly
those that labour in worde and tea-
chynge. Therfore if ye desire to be
honoured: fyrste loke that ye rule
well/ and that ye labour in worde and
teachyng: and than shall the people

haue you in all honour.

you wyll repe their carnall thinges/ and gether tithes & offrynges without any ſtryuynge : ryghte it is. For ſaynt Paule writynge vnto the Romanes/ſaith : They are dettours/ and oughte to mynyſtre vnto you in carnall thynges. Fyrſte ſowe you your ſpirituall thynges : and than ye ſhall repe plentifullye theyr carnall thynges. For truely that man is very harde and vniuſte / that wyll repe where he neuer dyd ſowe : and that will gether where he neuer ſkatered.

ye wyll haue the churches libertie/ and nat to be drawen afore ſeculare iuges/and that alſo is ryghte. For it is in the pſalmis. Touche ye nat myn annoynted. But if ye deſire this libertie : firſte vnlouſe your ſelfe from the worldly bondage / and from the ſeruices of men : and lyfte vp your ſelfe in to the true libertie / the ſpiri-

tuall

tuall libertie of Chriſte / in to grace from ſynnes / and ſerue you god / and raigne in hym. And than (beleue me) the people wyll nat touche the anoynted of theyr lorde god.

ye wolde be out of buſines in reſte and peace: and that is conuenient. But if ye wyll haue peace / come agayne to the god of peace and loue. Come agayne to Chriſte / in whom is the very true peace of the gooſte / the whiche paſſethe all wytte. Come agayne to youre ſelfe / and to youre priſtlye lyuynge. And to make an ende / as ſaynt Paule ſaythe: Be you refourmed in the newnes of your vnderſtandynge / that you ſauour thoſe thynges that are of god: and the peace of god ſhall be with you.

Theſe are they reuerent fathers and ryghte famous men / that I thought to be ſayde for the reformation of the churches eſtate: I truſte ye wyll take

them of your gentylnes to the beste. And if parauenture it be thoughte/ that J haue paste my boũdes in this sermon/or haue saide any thynge out of tempre/forgyue it me: and ye shal forgyue a man speaking of very zele/ to a man sorowyng the decaye of the churche: and consyder the thynge it selfe/nat regardynge any folisshenes. Consider the miserable fourme and state of the churche: and endeuour your selfes with all your myndes to reformme it.

Suffre nat fathers / this your so greatte a getherynge to departe in vayne. Suffre nat this your congregation to slyppe for naughte.

Truely ye are gethered often tymes to gether (but by your fauoure to speake the trouthe) yet J se nat what frute comethe of your assemblynge/ namely to the churche.

Go ye nowe in the spirite that ye

haue

haue called on / that by the helpe of it / ye may in this your councell fynde out / decerne / and ordeyne those thynges that maye be profitable to the churche / prayse vnto you / & honour vnto god. Vnto whom be all honour & glorie / for euer more. Amen.

Thomas Berthelet regius impressor excudebat. Cum priuilegio.

5550a

Colet, J.

HH 56/23

5550a

Colet, John